

108
Greatest Of All Times



Globally selected
Personalities



I began revolution with 82 men.
If I had to do it again, I do it with
10 or 15 and absolute faith.
**It does not matter how small
you are if you have faith
and plan of action.**

— Fidel Castro

AZ QUOTES

13 Aug 1926 <::><::><::> 25 Nov 2016

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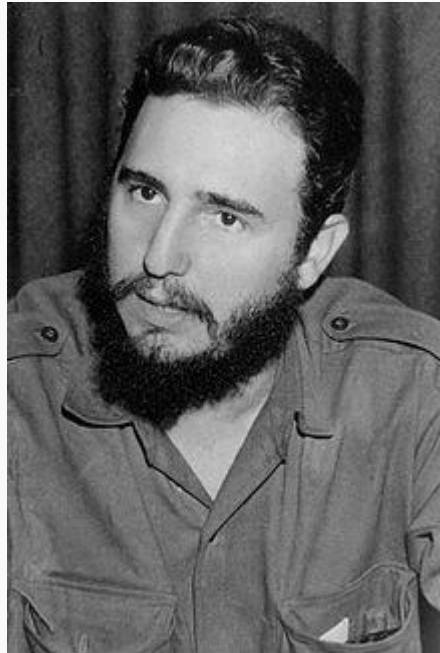
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13 Aug 1926



25 Nov 2016

El Comandante
Fidel Castro



Castro c. 1959

**First Secretary of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Cuba**

In office

3 October 1965 – 19 April 2011

Deputy Raúl Castro

Preceded by [Blas Roca Calderio](#)

Succeeded by [Raúl Castro](#)

15th President of the Council of State of Cuba

In office

2 December 1976 – 24 February 2008^{la}

Vice President Raúl Castro

Preceded by [Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado](#)

Succeeded by Raúl Castro

15th President of the Council of Ministers of Cuba

In office

2 December 1976 – 24 February 2008^[a]

Vice President Raúl Castro

Preceded by Himself (as prime minister)

Succeeded by Raúl Castro

15th [Prime Minister of Cuba](#)**In office**

16 February 1959 – 2 December 1976

President

- [Manuel Urrutia Lleó](#)
- Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado

Preceded by [José Miró Cardona](#)

Succeeded by Himself (as president of the Council of Ministers)

7th and 23rd [Secretary-General of the Non-Aligned Movement](#)**In office**

16 September 2006 – 24 February 2008

Preceded by [Abdullah Ahmad Badawi](#)

Succeeded by Raúl Castro

In office

10 September 1979 – 6 March 1983

Preceded by [J. R. Jayewardene](#)

Succeeded by [Neelam Sanjiva Reddy](#)

Personal details

Born Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz

13 August 1926
[Birán, Oriente](#), Cuba

Died 25 November 2016 (aged 90)
[Havana](#), Cuba

Resting place [Santa Ifigenia Cemetery](#), Santiago de Cuba

Political party [PCC](#) (from 1965)

Other political affiliations

- [PPC-O](#) (1947–1952)
- [M-26-7](#) (1955–1962)
- [PURSC](#) (1962–1965)

Spouses

- [Mirta Díaz-Balart](#)

(m. 1948; div. 1955)

- [Dalia Soto del Valle](#)

(m. 1980)

Domestic partner [Natalia Revuelta Clews](#) (1955–1959)

Children 11, including [Fidelito](#) and [Alina](#)

Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ángel Castro y Argiz (father)
Relatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 brothers, including Raúl and Ramón • 7 sisters, including Juanita
Alma mater	University of Havana
Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawyer • politician
Awards	Full list
Signature	
Nicknames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bola de Churre</i> • <i>El Caballo</i> • <i>El Comandante</i> • <i>El guajiro</i> • <i>El loco</i> • <i>Fifo</i> • <i>Pistolita</i>
Military service	
Allegiance	Republic of Cuba
Branch/service	Revolutionary Armed Forces
Years of service	1953–2016
Rank	<i>Comandante en Jefe</i>
Unit	26th of July Movement
Battles/wars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuban Revolution • Escambray rebellion • Bay of Pigs Invasion • Cuban Missile Crisis • Machurucuto incident • Angolan Civil War • Ogaden War • US invasion of Grenada
<p>a. [^] For medical reasons, presidential powers were transferred to the Vice President from 31 July 2006.</p>	

United States invasion of Grenada

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_invasion_of_Grenada

United States invasion of Grenada

Part of the [Cold War](#)



An American [Sikorsky CH-53 Sea Stallion](#) helicopter hovers above the ground near an abandoned Soviet [ZU-23-2](#) anti-aircraft weapon during the American invasion of Grenada, 1983.

Date 25 October – 2 November 1983 (8 days)

Location [Grenada](#)

Result American–CPF victory

- [Grenadian People's Revolutionary Government](#) toppled
- [Hudson Austin](#) deposed
- [Nicholas Brathwaite](#) sworn into office
- [Cuban](#) and [Soviet forces](#) expelled

Belligerents



[United States](#)



[Grenadian Opposition](#)

show

[Caribbean Peace Force](#):



[Grenada \(PRG\)](#)



[Cuba](#)



[Soviet Union](#)

Commanders and leaders

- [Ronald Reagan](#)
- [Caspar Weinberger](#)
- [Joseph Metcalf III](#)
- [Norman Schwarzkopf](#)
- [Edward Trobaugh](#)
- [Jack B. Farris](#)
- Sir [Paul Scoon](#)
- [Nicholas Brathwaite](#)
- [Tom Adams](#)
- [Rudyard Lewis](#)
- [Florizel Glasspole](#)
- [Edward Seaga](#)
- [Wilfred Jacobs](#)
- [Vere Bird](#)
- [Aurelius Marie](#)
- [Eugenia Charles](#)
- [Clement Arrindell](#)
- [Kennedy Simmonds](#)
- [Allen Montgomery Lewis](#)
- [John Compton](#)
- Sir [Sydney Gun-Munro](#)
- [Milton Cato](#)

- [Hudson Austin](#)
- [Fidel Castro](#)
- [Pedro Tortoló](#)

Strength








United States:

- 7,300 troops



Grenada:

- 1,300 troops

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 tanks • 1 LPH USS Guam Flagship ComPhibron • 1 LHA (USS Saipan (LHA-2)) • 1 aircraft carrier (USS Independence) • 3 destroyers • 2 frigates • 1 ammunition ship • 27 F-14A Tomcats <p>CPF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 353 peacekeepers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 APCs • 2 armored cars • 12 AA guns <p> Cuba: 784 (including 636 construction workers according to Cuba)</p>
Casualties and losses	
<p> United States:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 killed • 116 wounded • 36 injured: • 9 helicopters destroyed 	<p> Grenada:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 killed • 358 wounded • 6 APCs destroyed • 1 armored car destroyed <p> Cuba:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 killed • 59 wounded • 638 captured • 2 transport aircraft captured <p> Soviet Union:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 wounded • Weapons cache seized: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 APCs • 12 anti-aircraft guns • 291 submachine guns • 6,330 rifles • 5.6 million rounds of ammunition^[8]
<p>24 civilians killed (18 of them when a mental hospital was mistakenly bombed by U.S. Navy A-7s)</p>	

The [United States](#) and a [coalition](#) of six [Caribbean](#) countries invaded the small island nation of [Grenada](#), 100 miles (160 km) north of [Venezuela](#), at dawn on 25 October 1983. Codenamed **Operation Urgent Fury** by the U.S. military, it resulted in military occupation within a few days. It was triggered by strife within the [People's Revolutionary Government](#), which led to the house arrest and execution of the previous leader and second [Prime Minister](#) of [Grenada](#), [Maurice Bishop](#), and to the establishment of the Revolutionary Military Council, with [Hudson Austin](#) as chairman. Following the invasion there was an interim government appointed, and then [general elections held in December 1984](#).

The invading force consisted of the 1st and 2nd battalions of the [U.S. Army's 75th Ranger Regiment](#), the [82nd Airborne Division](#), and elements of the former [Rapid Deployment Force](#), [U.S. Marines](#), [U.S. Army Delta Force](#), [Navy SEALs](#), and a small group Air Force [TACPs](#) from the 21st [TASS](#) Shaw AFB ancillary forces, totaling 7,600 troops, together with [Jamaican](#) forces and troops of the [Regional Security System](#) (RSS). The

invaders quickly defeated Grenadian resistance after a low-altitude assault by the Rangers and 82nd Airborne at [Point Salines Airport](#) on the island's south end, and a Marine helicopter and amphibious landing at [Pearls Airport](#) on the north end. Austin's military government was deposed. An advisory council designated [Sir Paul Scoon](#) as [Governor-General of Grenada](#) until the 1984 elections.

The invasion date of 25 October is now a national holiday in Grenada, called [Thanksgiving Day](#), commemorating the freeing of several political prisoners who were subsequently elected to office. A [truth and reconciliation commission](#) was launched in 2000 to re-examine some of the controversies of that tumultuous period in the 1980s; in particular, the commission made an unsuccessful attempt to locate the remains of Maurice Bishop's body, which had been disposed of at Austin's order and never found.

At the time, the invasion drew criticism from many countries. British Prime Minister [Margaret Thatcher](#) privately disapproved of the mission, in part because she was not consulted in advance and was given very short notice of the military operation, but she supported it in public. The [United Nations General Assembly](#) condemned it as "a flagrant violation of international law" on 2 November 1983, by a vote of 108 to 9.

The invasion exposed communication and coordination problems between the different branches of the U.S. military when operating together as a joint force. This triggered post-action investigations resulting in sweeping operational changes in the form of the [Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act](#).

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Cuban Revolution

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Revolution

Cuban Revolution



Fidel Castro and his men in the [Sierra Maestra](#)

Date [26 July 1953](#) – [1 January 1959](#)
(5 years, 5 months and 6 days)

Location [Cuba](#)

Result 26th of July Movement victory

- Overthrow of [Fulgencio Batista's](#) government
- Establishment of a government led by [Fidel Castro](#)
- Beginning of the [Escambray rebellion](#)

Belligerents	
 Cuba <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Cuban Constitutional Army 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  26th of July Movement  Revolutionary Directorate of March 13th  Second National Front of Escambray
Commanders and leaders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Fulgencio Batista  Eulogio Cantillo  Fernando Neugart  José Quevedo Pérez (Until July 1958)  Alberto del Río Chaviano  Joaquín Casillas   Cornelio Rojas   Fernández Suero  Cándido Hernández  Alfredo Abon Lee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Fidel Castro  Raúl Castro  Che Guevara  Abel Santamaría   Camilo Cienfuegos  Huber Matos  Juan Almeida Bosque  Frank País †  René Ramos Latour †  Roberto Rodríguez †  Humberto Sorí Marín  José Quevedo Pérez (from July 1958)  Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo  William Alexander Morgan  José Antonio Echeverría †  Rolando Cubela Secades
Strength	
 20,000 (1958)	 3,000 (1958)
Casualties and losses	
2,000 killed ^[1]	1,000 killed
Arms captured: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 M4 Sherman tank 12 mortars 2 bazookas 33 machine guns 142 M-1 rifles 200 Cristóbal carbines 	
Thousands of civilians tortured and murdered by Batista's government; unknown number of people executed by the Rebel Army	

The **Cuban Revolution** ([Spanish](#): *Revolución cubana*) was the military and political overthrow of [Fulgencio Batista](#)'s dictatorship, which had reigned as the government of Cuba between 1952 and 1959. The revolution began after the [1952 Cuban coup d'état](#), which saw Batista topple the nascent Cuban democracy and consolidate power. Among those opposing the coup was [Fidel Castro](#), then a novice attorney who attempted to contest the coup through Cuba's judiciary. Once these efforts proved fruitless, Fidel Castro and his brother [Raúl](#) led an armed [attack on the Cuban military's Moncada Barracks](#) on 26 July 1953.

Following the attack's failure, Fidel Castro and his co-conspirators were arrested and formed the [26th of July Movement](#) (M-26-7) in detention. At his trial, Fidel Castro launched into a two hour speech that won him national fame as he laid out his grievances against the Batista dictatorship. In an attempt to win public approval, Batista granted amnesty to the surviving Moncada Barracks attackers and the Castros fled into exile. During their exile, the Castros consolidated their strategy in Mexico and subsequently re-entered Cuba in 1956, accompanied by [Che Guevara](#), whom they had encountered during their time in Mexico.

Returning to Cuba [aboard the Granma](#), the Castros, Guevara, and other supporters encountered gunfire from Batista's troops. The rebels fled to the [Sierra Maestra](#) where the M-26-7 rebel forces would reorganize, conducting urban sabotage and covert recruitment. Over time the [Popular Socialist Party](#), once the largest and most powerful organizations opposing Batista, would see its influence and power wane in favor of the 26th of July Movement. As the irregular war against Batista escalated, the rebel forces transformed from crude, [guerrilla](#) fighters into a cohesive fighting force that could confront Batista's army in [military engagements](#). By the time the rebels were able to oust Batista, the revolution was being driven by a coalition between the Popular Socialist Party, the 26th of July Movement and the [Revolutionary Directorate of 13 March](#).

The rebels, led by the 26th of July Movement, finally toppled Batista on 31 December 1958, after which he fled the country. Batista's government was dismantled as Castro became the most prominent leader of the revolutionary forces. Soon thereafter, the 26th of July Movement established itself as the de facto government. Although Castro was immensely popular in the period immediately following Batista's ouster, he quickly consolidated power, leading to domestic and international tensions. 26 July 1953 is celebrated in Cuba as *Día de la Revolución* (from [Spanish](#): "Day of the Revolution"). The 26th of July Movement later reformed along [Marxist–Leninist](#) lines, becoming the [Communist Party of Cuba](#) in October 1965.

The Cuban Revolution had powerful and profound domestic and international repercussions. In particular, it shipwrecked [Cuba–United States relations](#), although efforts to improve them, such as the [Cuban thaw](#), gained momentum during the 2010s and have continued through the 2020s. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, Castro's government began a program of [nationalization](#), centralization of the [press](#) and political consolidation that transformed [Cuba's economy](#) and civil society, angering sectors of the Cuban population and the American government. In the aftermath of the revolution, Castro's authoritarianism in conjunction with the struggling economy lead to the [Cuban Exodus](#) as citizens fled the island, with the majority arriving in the United States. The revolution also heralded an era of [Cuban intervention](#) in foreign conflicts in Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Several rebellions occurred between 1959 and 1965, mainly in the [Escambray Mountains](#), which were suppressed by the revolutionary government.

Fidel Castro

Obituary

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/26/fidel-castro-obituary>

Charismatic leader of the revolution and president of Cuba
who bestrode the world stage for half a century

[Fidel Castro: Cuba declares nine days of national mourning - live updates](#)

Fidel Castro, who has died at the age of 90, was one of the more extraordinary political figures of the 20th century. After leading a successful revolution on a Caribbean island in 1959, he became a player on the global stage, dealing on equal terms with successive leaders of the two nuclear superpowers during the cold war. A charismatic figure from the developing world, his influence was felt far beyond the shores of Cuba. Known as Fidel to friends and enemies alike, his life story is inevitably that of his people and their revolution. Even in old age, [he still exercised a magnetic attraction wherever he went](#), his audience as fascinated by the dinosaur from history as they had once been by the revolutionary firebrand of earlier times.

The Russians were beguiled by him (Nikita Khrushchev and Anastas Mikoyan in particular), European intellectuals took him to their hearts (notably Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir), African revolutionaries welcomed his assistance and advice, and the leaders of Latin American peasant movements were inspired by his revolution. In the 21st century, he acquired fresh relevance as the mentor of [Hugo Chávez](#) in Venezuela and [Evo Morales](#) in Bolivia, the leaders of two unusual revolutions that threatened the hegemony of the US. Only the US itself, which viewed Castro as public enemy No 1 (until they found an "axis of evil" further afield), and the Chinese in the Mao era, who found his political behaviour essentially irresponsible, refused to fall for his charm. It took until Barack Obama's presidency for US restrictions to be eased – but by then intestinal illness had compelled Castro's resignation as president in favour of his brother Raúl, who saw in the [historic normalising of relations](#) between the two countries. Nonetheless, Fidel maintained his antagonism until the end, declaring in a letter on his 90th birthday this year that "we don't need the empire to give us anything".

Castro's rule thus spanned nearly five decades, and during the cold war hardly a year went by without his mark being made on international politics. On several occasions the world held its breath as events in and around Cuba threatened to spill beyond the

Caribbean. In 1961 an invasion at the [Bay of Pigs](#) by Cuban exiles, encouraged and financed by the US government, sought to bring down Castro's revolution. It was swiftly defeated. In [1962 Khrushchev's government installed nuclear missiles in Cuba](#) in an attempt to provide the infant revolution with "protection" of the only kind the US seemed prepared to respect. And in [November 1975](#) a massive and wholly unexpected airlift of Cuban troops to Africa turned the tide of a South African invasion of newly independent Angola, inevitably heating up cold war quarrels.



The young anti-Batista guerrilla leader Fidel Castro.

Castro was a hero in the mould of Garibaldi, a national leader whose ideals and rhetoric were to change the history of countries far from his own. Latin America, ruled for the most part in the 1950s by oligarchies inherited from the colonial era, of landowners, soldiers and Catholic priests, was suddenly brought into the global limelight, its governments challenged by the revolutionary gauntlet thrown down by the island republic. Whether in favour or against, an entire Latin American generation was influenced by Castro.

Cuba under Fidel was a country where indigenous nationalism was at least as significant as imported socialism, and where the legend of José Martí, the patriot poet and organiser of the 19th-century struggle against Spain, was always more influential than the philosophy of Karl Marx. Castro's skill, and one key to his political longevity, lay in keeping the twin themes of socialism and nationalism endlessly in play. He gave the Cuban people back their history, the name of their island stamped firmly on the story of the 20th century. This was no mean achievement, though by the early 1990s, when the collapse of the Soviet Union brought the Cuban economy down with a bump, the old rhetoric had begun to wear thin.

Fidel was the son of Lina Ruz, a Cuban woman from Pinar del Río, and Angel Castro, an immigrant from Spanish Galicia who became a successful landowner in central Cuba. Educated by the Jesuits, and subsequently as a lawyer at Havana University, he was clearly marked for politics from early youth. A brilliant student orator and a successful athlete, he was the outstanding figure of his generation of students.

The return to power by coup d'état in 1952 of the old dictator, [Fulgencio Batista](#), seemed to rule out the traditional road to political power for the young lawyer, and an impatient Castro embraced the cause of insurrection, common in those years in the unstable countries that bordered the Caribbean. On 26 July 1953, he led a group of revolutionaries who sought to overthrow the dictator by seizing the second largest military base in the country, the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba.

The attack was a dismal failure, and many of the erstwhile rebels were captured and killed. Castro himself survived, to make a notable speech from the dock – ["history will absolve me"](#) – outlining his political programme. It became the classic text of the 26th of July Movement that he was later to organise, using the failed Moncada attack as a rallying cry to unite the anti-Batista opposition into a single political force.

Granted an amnesty two years later, Castro was exiled to Mexico. With his brother Raúl, he prepared a group of armed fighters to assist the civilian resistance movement. Soon he had met and enrolled in his band an Argentinian doctor, [Che Guevara](#), whose name was to be irrevocably linked to the revolution. Castro's tiny force sailed from Mexico to Cuba in December 1956 in the Granma, a small and leaky motor vessel. Landing in the east of the island after a rough crossing, the rebel band was attacked and almost annihilated by Batista's forces. A few members of Castro's troop survived to struggle up the impenetrable mountains of the Sierra Maestra. There they tended their wounds, regained their strength, made contact with the local peasants, and established links with the opposition in the city of Santiago.



Fidel Castro (L) with Ernesto Che Guevara.

Throughout 1957 and 1958, Castro's guerrilla band grew in strength and daring. They had no blueprint. Their first aim had been to survive. Only later did revolutionary theorists develop the notion that the very existence of an armed struggle in rural areas might help to define the course of civilian politics, putting the dictatorship on to the defensive, and forcing squabbling opposition groups to unite behind the guerrilla banner. Yet that is what took place in Cuba. Civilian parties and opposition movements were forced to accept orders from the guerrillas in the hills, and even the conservative and unadventurous Communist party of Cuba eventually came to bow the knee to Castro in the summer of

1958. By December that year, Guevara had captured the central city of Santa Clara, and on New Year's Eve, Batista fled the country. In January 1959, Castro, aged 30, arrived in triumph in Havana. The Cuban revolution had begun.

His early programme was one of radical reform, comparable to that espoused by populist governments in Latin America over the previous 30 years. The expropriation of large estates, the nationalisation of foreign enterprises and the establishment of schools and clinics throughout the island were the initial demands of his movement.

Like most Latin American leftwingers at that time, Castro was influenced by Marxism – whatever that might mean in the Latin American context, about which Marx himself had little to say. In practice it meant a warm feeling for the (far away) Russian revolution, and a strong dislike of (nearby) Yankee “imperialism”. Radicals were familiar with the historical tendency of the US to interfere in Latin America in general and Cuba in particular – economically all the time and militarily at all too frequent intervals. This leftist inclination did not usually involve much enthusiasm for the local Communist party which, in Cuba as elsewhere in Latin America (except in Chile), had always been small and lacking influence. Castro himself was not a communist, though his brother had strong sympathies, as did Guevara.

Castro's anti-American rhetoric and nationalisation of US companies soon aroused American anger. The bungled Bay of Pigs invasion, in the [early months of John F Kennedy's presidency](#), postponed any possible improvement in relations. US dislike of Castro was reinforced by the presence of an immense diaspora of the Cuban middle class, based chiefly in Miami, who had left in a hurry and expected at any moment to return in triumph. It was not to be.

The missile crisis of October 1962 sealed the hostility. Khrushchev's move into Cuba – introducing nuclear weapons (other than US ones) into an area of the world where the [Monroe doctrine](#) was held to prevail – was widely regarded as destabilising, although the Soviet Union itself had US nuclear missiles on its borders, notably in Turkey. Khrushchev was forced to withdraw his missiles after days of global tension, although not before he had received a tacit promise from the Americans that there would be no further attempts to invade Cuba.

Castro's performance during the crisis was less than heroic. The fate of his revolution was decided elsewhere. The compromise on the missiles reached between Washington and Moscow enabled his regime to survive, but the ignominious manner of its happening was to fuel Castro's fierce sense of independence. His only success in the affair was his absolute refusal to permit US inspection of the evacuated missile sites.



Fidel Castro with Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow in 1963.

Whether Castro was pushed into the Soviet camp by US mishandling in the early years, or whether that was where he planned to be all along, is a matter of historical debate. There is evidence on both sides, and Castro allowed different interpretations to flourish. Guevara and Raúl Castro were certainly persuaded of the need to make an alliance with the Cuban communists, the only party that had troubled to enrol the country's black people, and they had great hopes of economic (and later military) support from the Soviet Union. Yet for the first 10 years of Castro's regime – until 1968 when he supported the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Leonid Brezhnev – he fought hard to maintain Cuba's separate identity as a developing country struggling to take its own particular road to socialism. Even when he had taken the Soviet shilling, he tried ceaselessly to build bridges elsewhere – in Latin America (to Peru, Panama and Chile); in Africa (to Algeria, Angola and Ethiopia); and in Asia (to Vietnam – *Vietnam Heróico* as the Cubans liked to call it – and North Korea).

Although Kennedy had given a tacit promise to Khrushchev that invasion would never be repeated, the Americans continued to permit CIA-sponsored attacks on the island and refused to lift their economic blockade, pressurising the countries of Latin America to join in. Castro was effectively deprived of all contact with the US mainland, and later with most of Latin America. At first it was just fresh vegetables that Cubans could no longer obtain from Miami. Soon they were forced to abandon hope of receiving machinery and technology from the capitalist world. The oil blockade was particularly damaging. While the Soviet Union came to the rescue when oil could no longer be obtained from Venezuela or the Gulf of Mexico, the long journey from the Black Sea was hardly ideal. Their ships could carry no returning trade.

For a Caribbean island, rooted historically and geographically in the sea between the US and Venezuela, it was a cruel blow to lose the taproot of its commerce. Cuba had had previous experience of a monopolistic trade relationship, with Spain, its far-off *madre patria*, but the Soviet Union was even further away, and had little in common with Cuba except political rhetoric. The close Soviet link was to have a serious disadvantage in that it gave Cuba little opportunity to experiment economically. Guevara had hoped in the early days that the island might escape from the tyranny of sugar production and diversify

its economy, but Castro perceived this to be an empty dream. Sugar was the only significant product Cuba could exchange for Soviet oil.

Perhaps Castro should never have made the effort to go it alone. Some thought the price was too high. The US was, and is, immensely powerful – and very close. The Dominican Republic of Juan Bosch was unable to escape US pressure in 1965, nor could Salvador Allende's Chile in 1973. The baleful experience of Nicaragua, 30 years after the Cuban revolution, showed that the passage of time had not made the task of securing sovereignty any easier for a small Latin American state. Yet Castro's largely successful attempt to escape from the geographic fatalism that had affected Latin America for so long should not go uncelebrated.

Isolated from Latin America in the 1960s by the US blockade, Castro made efforts to assist revolutionaries who sought to turn the Andes into a new Sierra Maestra. The impact was considerable, yet brought Cuba little political reward. No revolutionary group was able to repeat the example of Cuba in the early years, and even when Guevara himself joined the fray in Bolivia in 1966, [his expedition was to end in disaster a year later](#).

After 10 years in power, safely basking in Soviet approval, Castro's policy towards Latin America became more circumspect. When Allende, a friendly socialist, won the presidential elections in [Chile in 1970](#), Castro counselled caution. The victorious [Sandinistas of Nicaragua received the same message in 1979](#). Castro knew from experience that building socialism in one small, developing country was not an easy option. Guevara had once called for the creation of "one, two, three, many Vietnams", but who was going to fund and sustain them? The large Soviet economic support for Cuba was never going to be matched in Chile or Nicaragua.



**Fidel Castro greets three African presidents -
Sekou Tour, Agostinho Neto and Luis Cabral.**

Castro's Cuba was an early member of the [Non-Aligned Movement](#), the first attempt to mobilise the emerging developing countries for a political purpose. Soon, leaders of African revolutionary movements were honoured guests in Havana – notably Ben Bella and Houari Boumédiène from Algeria, and Agostinho Neto from Angola, in full rebellion

against the Portuguese. Guevara, by touring Africa in the early 1960s and then going to fight with guerrillas organised in the eastern Congo by Laurent Kabila, later president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, also helped to bring Africa into focus in Havana.

There was a further dimension. For Castro, Cuba was not just a Caribbean country with Hispanic connections. He was the first white Cuban leader to recognise the country's large black, former slave population and, after initial hesitation, to make efforts to bring them into the mainstream of national life. Sergeant Batista, his predecessor, banned from Havana's top clubs because of his mixed race, had secured considerable support from black people in the Cuban army, and Castro took up their cause. His championing of them came at the same time as the civil rights movement was growing in the US, and this may have contributed to the nervousness of the US government over his regime. On an early visit to the UN in New York, [Castro stayed at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem](#), a symbolic but significant gesture.

Recovering Cuba's black roots, both in the African slave trade and in the independence struggle of the 19th century, was a natural prelude to taking an interest in an Africa still in the throes of decolonisation. Cuban troops played a historic role in 1975 in rescuing Neto's embryonic MPLA government in Angola from the South African army. Castro displayed a personal interest in the Angolan expedition, as he did two years later in Ethiopia, when Cuban soldiers were sent to assist the regime of [Mengistu Haile Mariam](#). The Cubans helped the Ethiopians to push back the Somalis from the Ogaden. Castro's boldness in flinging men and resources into foreign wars when Cuba itself was under permanent threat of attack was typical of his style.

The policies of glasnost and perestroika espoused by Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s brought a dramatic unravelling of the Cuban revolution. Castro was always an opportunist communist rather than a true believer such as Erich Honecker, the East German leader, yet the two men shared a distrust of Gorbachev's reforms. The stability and survival of their states depended on Russian support, although Cuba, the fruit of a popular revolution, had greater staying power than East Germany. Unlike some in the Cuban political elite who appeared willing to embrace changes in the Soviet system, Castro recognised that they would lead to disaster. For Cuba, the writing was on the wall even before the collapse of the Soviet Union after the [failed coup against Gorbachev in August 1991](#). Castro knew that the US had made clear to the Russians, in 1990, that future economic assistance to the Soviet Union would depend on an end to Soviet aid to Cuba.

Castro declared a state of emergency, of the kind that would have been imposed had there been a military invasion. His political genius was for improvisation and compromise, coupled with a verbal felicity that proved capable of persuading people that he was doing one thing when actually doing another. He now projected Cuba as the world's first truly "green" society, with industry powered by windmills, and the people riding bicycles. It was guerrilla war all over again, with Castro invoking the spirit of the Sierra Maestra.

Then, before any significant change could be made to the Cuban system, the Soviet Union imploded, and with it went the extensive economic network that it had maintained. A form of perestroika had now to be forced on the Cubans whether they wanted it or

not, for Castro's ally had simply melted away. Boris Yeltsin, the new Russian leader, was no friend. He had even visited Jorge Mas Canosa, the principal organiser of the Cuban exiles in Miami, and he soon removed Russian soldiers from the island and abandoned most of the preferential economic agreements that had kept the Cuban economy afloat for so long. Hopes in the US that Cuba would go the way of the countries of eastern Europe were encouraged by legislation in Congress that sought to tighten the economic embargo.



Castro with Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.

Almost miraculously, Castro survived this period, throwing open the country to foreign tourists and permitting a dual economy in which the US dollar reigned supreme. In January 1998, his efforts to secure fresh international recognition were crowned by a visit from [Pope John Paul II](#), seen by some as the author of the overthrow of communism in eastern Europe. Castro's communism had always been tempered by respect for the Catholic church, and he had long taken an interest in liberation theology and in the convergence on the ground in Latin America – notably in the period of military dictatorships in the 1970s – between Catholic priests and leftwing human rights activists. Yet the pope was an outspoken opponent of that trend in his church, and his visit thus seemed all the more unusual and surprising. If John Paul had hoped that his visit would help to undermine Castro's regime, he was to be disappointed.

Early in this century, Castro's star was once again in the ascendant, with a marked improvement in the economic situation and the presence in Latin America of a powerful and wealthy new acolyte. [Hugo Chávez of Venezuela](#), first elected in December 1998, was soon to identify himself as Castro's favourite son. Enjoying huge oil royalties, Chávez was able to finance mutual aid that brought thousands of Cuban doctors to work in the shanty towns of Venezuela, and hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil to the thirsty refineries of Cuba. The impact on the economy was immediate.

Castro was a legend long before his death. The early years of revolutionary government, with dashing young men in guerrilla fatigues sporting the then unfashionable beards grown in the revolutionary war, were romantic, chaotic and exhausting. Castro worked at all hours of day and night (mostly night), made long and didactic speeches, and was rarely out of his 4x4, ceaselessly travelling from one end of the country to another.

Over the years, he calmed down, became more measured, spoke as often but not for so long. His government became less of a one-man band, and power was sufficiently

decentralised to allow him to travel abroad for months at a time. The Americans could never forgive him, but he became a welcome visitor all over the developing world, and notably, in the 1980s and 1990s, in Latin America. Although too long-winded for European tastes, the best of his full-scale speeches were models of wit and clarity, well-prepared and delivered with the panache of a trained orator.

A handful of women found space in Castro's life, but he always claimed he was married to the revolution. He had married a fellow student, Mirta Díaz-Balart, in 1948, and they had a son, Fidelito, but she divorced him a few years later and went to live in the US. An early lover was [Naty Revuelta](#), with whom he had a daughter, [Alina](#), and he was always close to Celia Sánchez, the *compañera* he met in the mountains in 1956. She died in 1980. In that year, he took a new wife, Dalia Soto del Valle, a teacher from the town of Trinidad, who was rarely seen in public. They had five boys – Angel, Antonio, Alejandro, Alexis and Alex – named allegedly after his various *noms de guerre* in the Sierra Maestra. Outside these relationships he had a son, Jorge Angel, and a daughter, Francisca.

Castro's revolution was a remarkably peaceful process, apart from a number of Batista's henchmen shot in the first weeks. Some revolutionary enthusiasts of the first generation could not stomach the government's leftward drift, and swaths of the professional middle class left for Miami, but the revolution did not "eat its children". Much of the inner group around Castro survived into old age.



Castro falls badly after a speech in Santa Clara in 2004.

Tensions arose occasionally with the old communists and the island's intellectuals (who suffered as much from blockade-induced isolation as from outright censorship), and in 1989 a couple of senior generals were executed for drug-running. Critics liked to argue that "General" Castro was no different in essence from any other Latin America dictator, yet such criticism was hard to sustain. He more closely resembled the Spanish colonial governor-generals, many of whom were benign autocrats, than the sanguinary military leaders of the 20th century. Even when his regime was under attack, he retained immense popular support. His huge personal charm and charisma, and his political genius, kept him on top throughout: the only force that could defeat him was the infirmity of old age.

The first premonition of his mortality came in October 2004, when he stumbled badly after a speech made in Santa Clara. He fractured an arm and broke a knee, and was for a while confined to a wheelchair. Yet he kept up a heavy schedule of television appearances, announcing in March 2005 an end to the "special period" of austerity that

had begun at the time of the Soviet collapse. In July 2006, he suffered a more serious setback, and formally handed over power on a temporary basis to his brother Raúl after emergency intestinal surgery. He never fully recovered and was rarely seen in public again. In February 2008, he announced his resignation as president of the Council of State. The tasks of government, he said, "required mobility and the total commitment that I am no longer in a physical condition to offer". Raúl Castro, five years younger and Fidel's alter ego since the attack on the Moncada barracks in 1953, became the new president of Cuba.

Castro is survived by his children, his brother, Raúl, and sister, Juanita.

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Fidel Castro's Epic 1960 UN Speech

<https://www.un.org/en/video/fidel-castros-epic-1960-un-speech>

The United Nations General Assembly requests that delegates limit their addresses to 15 minutes. On 26 September 1960, Fidel Castro of Cuba remained on the rostrum for 269 minutes, making his address the longest timed speech in General Assembly history.

Delivered just one year after the Cuban Revolution that led to the overthrow of the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista, Castro used his time on the rostrum to criticize U.S. imperialism and its interference in Latin American affairs and to accuse the United States of supporting authoritarian regimes in the region.

Utilizing material from the UN Audiovisual Library, this production offers a unique view into pivotal moments of this historic event.

<https://www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/>



Fidel Castro(1926-2016)

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0004242/>

[Visit the Web Page to watch/see the FILM](#)



<https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/index.htm>

Some Pictures

<https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/images/index.htm>

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON SPEAKERS
Fidel Castro, April 20, 1959

<https://www.loc.gov/rr//record/pressclub/castro.html>

His Speech

Timings (hh:mm:ss)

Introductions: 00:00-07:48

Speech: 07:49-27:03

Q & A: 27:10-01:02:04

Topics of the Talk

- Cuban Army: 13:05-14:14
- Cuban Democracy: 14:14-15:33
- Cuban Friendship/Relationship with U.S.: 17:44-19:39; 25:23-27:03
- Power of the U.S. Press (19:39-20:02) Purpose of Visit: 23:15-24:06
- U.S. Economic Assistance to Other Countries: 29:45-32:58
- Dictatorship, Public Opinion, and Free Press: 33:00-35:05
- Free Elections and Democracy in Cuba: 35:05-46:25
- Nikita Khrushchev as a Dictator: 46:26-47:07
- Aid from the Soviet Union: 47:10-47:52
- Double Jeopardy in Cuban Trials: 47:55-52:43
- Agrarian Reform and U.S. Business Interests in Cuban Sugar Companies: 55:04-59:55

THE BAY OF PIGS

<https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/the-bay-of-pigs>

On April 17, 1961, 1,400 Cuban exiles launched what became a botched invasion at the Bay of Pigs on the south coast of Cuba.

In 1959, Fidel Castro came to power in an armed revolt that overthrew Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. The US government distrusted Castro and was wary of his relationship with Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Soviet Union.

Before his inauguration, John F. Kennedy was briefed on a plan by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) developed during the Eisenhower administration to train Cuban exiles for an invasion of their homeland. The plan anticipated that the Cuban people and elements of the Cuban military would support the invasion. The ultimate goal was the overthrow of Castro and the establishment of a non-communist government friendly to the United States.

Training

President Eisenhower approved the program in March 1960. The CIA set up training camps in Guatemala, and by November the operation had trained a small army for an assault landing and guerilla warfare.

José Miró Cardona led the anti-Castro Cuban exiles in the United States. A former member of Castro's government, he was the head of the Cuban Revolutionary Council, an exile committee. Cardona was poised to take over the provisional presidency of Cuba if the invasion succeeded.



Despite efforts of the government to keep the invasion plans covert, it became common knowledge among Cuban exiles in Miami. Through Cuban intelligence, Castro learned of the guerilla training camps in Guatemala as early as October 1960, and the press reported widely on events as they unfolded.

Shortly after his inauguration, in February 1961, President Kennedy authorized the invasion plan. But he was determined to disguise U.S. support. The landing point at the Bay of Pigs was part of the deception. The site was a remote swampy area on the southern coast of Cuba, where a night landing might bring a force ashore against little resistance and help to hide any U.S. involvement. Unfortunately, the landing site also left the invading force more than 80 miles from refuge in Cuba's Escambray Mountains, if anything went wrong.

The Plan

The original invasion plan called for two air strikes against Cuban air bases. A 1,400-man invasion force would disembark under cover of darkness and launch a surprise attack. Paratroopers dropped in advance of the invasion would disrupt transportation and repel Cuban forces. Simultaneously, a smaller force would land on the east coast of Cuba to create confusion.

The main force would advance across the island to Matanzas and set up a defensive position. The United Revolutionary Front would send leaders from South Florida and establish a provisional government. The success of the plan depended on the Cuban population joining the invaders.

The Invasion

The first mishap occurred on April 15, 1961, when eight bombers left Nicaragua to bomb Cuban airfields.



The CIA had used obsolete World War II B-26 bombers, and painted them to look like Cuban air force planes. The bombers missed many of their targets and left most of Castro's air force intact. As news broke of the attack, photos of the repainted U.S. planes became public and revealed American support for the invasion. President Kennedy cancelled a second air strike.

On April 17, the Cuban-exile invasion force, known as Brigade 2506, landed at beaches along the Bay of Pigs and immediately came under heavy fire. Cuban planes strafed the invaders, sank two escort ships, and destroyed half of the exile's air support. Bad weather hampered the ground force, which had to work with soggy equipment and insufficient ammunition.

The Counterattack

Over the next 24 hours, Castro ordered roughly 20,000 troops to advance toward the beach, and the Cuban air force continued to control the skies. As the situation grew increasingly grim, President Kennedy authorized an "air-umbrella" at dawn on April 19—six unmarked American fighter planes took off to help defend the brigade's B-26 aircraft flying. But the planes arrived an hour late, most likely confused by the change in time zones between Nicaragua and Cuba. They were shot down by the Cubans, and the invasion was crushed later that day.

Some exiles escaped to the sea, while the rest were killed or rounded up and imprisoned by Castro's forces. Almost 1,200 members of Brigade 2506 surrendered, and more than 100 were killed.

The Aftermath

The brigade prisoners remained in captivity for 20 months, as the United States negotiated a deal with Fidel Castro. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy made personal pleas for contributions from pharmaceutical companies and baby food manufacturers, and Castro eventually settled on \$53 million worth of baby food and medicine in exchange for the prisoners.

On December 23, 1962, just two months after the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis, a plane containing the first group of freed prisoners landed in the United States. A week later, on Saturday, December 29, surviving brigade members gathered for a ceremony in Miami's Orange Bowl, where the brigade's flag was handed over to President Kennedy. "I can assure you," the president promised, "that this flag will be returned to this brigade in a free Havana."

The disaster at the Bay of Pigs had a lasting impact on the Kennedy administration. Determined to make up for the failed invasion, the administration-initiated Operation Mongoose—a plan to sabotage and destabilize the Cuban government and economy, which included the possibility of assassinating Castro.

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Cuba under Fidel's

Long Shadow

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/12/cuba-under-fidels-long-shadow/>

He achieved goals yet eroded rights, and
leaves an uncertain legacy.

<<< Professor Jorge Dominguez

Following the death of Cuban leader Fidel Castro, one of the most mythical and divisive political figures of the 20th century, his legacy appears up for grabs.

A hero for some and a villain for others, Castro will be remembered for leading a revolution that toppled a U.S.-backed military dictator in 1959 and for establishing a Communist regime on the doorstep of the United States in the midst of the Cold War.

But Castro's record as Cuba's leader is mixed. Castro ruled his country for 47 years and spearheaded enormous advances in education and literacy, health care, and social equality. At the same time, he imprisoned thousands of dissenters and stifled civil liberties and political freedoms.

To understand the complexity of Castro, the Harvard Gazette interviewed Jorge Dominguez, Antonio Madero Professor for the Study of Mexico, who is a leading expert on Cuba. This fall, Dominguez has been teaching a course on the Cuban Revolution, in which he instructs students to look at all aspects of Castro's legacy. In his last class of the semester this past Friday, Dominguez gave his final judgment

on Castro, the trend lines of which resemble his answers to **THE GAZETTE** in the text here.



GAZETTE: Fidel Castro was an extraordinary political figure of the 20th century, and yet for most Americans, including several U.S. presidents, he was seen primarily as a Communist dictator. What are the facets of Castro's legacy that have been most overlooked in the United States?

DOMINGUEZ: He probably was not a Communist for a good part of his life. And an interesting story, which may have not been entirely clear to Castro even on the day he died, is how it was that he went from being a political activist to becoming a Communist, how did he go from being a good student, a popular guy, a great athlete in the nation's elite private school to do what he did. That's a story that used to be of great interest to U.S. presidents and to the American public, but it's good to remember that for some significant portion of his life he was not a Communist.

GAZETTE: Who was he before he became a Communist?

DOMINGUEZ: He was a political adversary of the Communist Party that existed in Cuba. He had no support, no relationship with the Soviet Union before he came to power. He actually prevented the early development of Soviet-Cuban relations after the revolution. He blocked the arrival of an ambassador that the Soviet Union wanted to send. This is something that U.S. presidents should have tried to understand better. It was more important to understand why so many of the things to which the U.S. government most objected, in Cuba's behavior and Castro's behavior, received such broad support elsewhere. Let me give you a specific example. The U.S. said that apartheid in South Africa was wrong, but no one, other than Fidel, sent troops to defeat the South African military when they invaded Angola. No one, other than Fidel, committed troops in support of the independence of Namibia, which had been occupied by South Africa. Henry Kissinger and the Ford administration were appalled at this behavior, but in Africa there was almost unanimous cheer.

GAZETTE: How was it that Castro became a Communist? Was it the decision of the United States to isolate Cuba that pushed Castro into the arms of the Soviet Union?

DOMINGUEZ: I think his decision to be the man that he was was his own. I never believed in the argument that Fidel was pushed to be a Communist and an ally of the Soviet Union. I think he deserves now in death the respect to say that this is a very smart man who knew what he was doing. He was not a robot, a child, or a puppet of anybody. But the U.S. applied policies that often were stupid and counterproductive — even toward the end of Castro's career — and facilitated but did not cause Fidel's shift. Before Fidel stepped down because of his illness, the Bush administration published a 300-page book about how the U.S. was going to help the reconstruction of Cuba. Among the things the U.S. proposed was to help Cuba with education and health care. On what planet were the people who wrote this? It's true that by that time Cuba's education and health care were not as good as they have been in the past, and that's why support for the government, for the Communist Party, for the regime weakened over the past 25 years.

But still, in some respects, it was a heck of a lot better than in the U.S., where more babies die at birth in Washington, D.C., than in Havana.

GAZETTE: How did the Cold War influence the view of the U.S. about Castro? The U.S. saw him as a pawn of the Soviet Union.

DOMINGUEZ: Did the Soviets tell Castro to deploy tens of thousands of troops to Angola? The Soviets didn't know what he was doing. He did it on his own. The U.S. did finally recognize that he wasn't just a puppet of the Soviet Union, that he was doing it on his own. His support for anti-colonialist struggle in Africa, and in particular against Portugal, which had colonies in the continent, gave him enormous popularity. They didn't want to remain colonies, and the one nation that did the most [to help them] turned out to be Cuba. The U.S. was horrified because Portugal was a NATO ally, and Cuba was mucking things up by helping all of these people that the rest of Africa called freedom fighters. What is interesting about a lot of this stuff is that Cubans got away with it, and the Soviets were in the background. Fidel was doing things that revealed a more accurate understanding of the world, in the middle of the Cold War, than the U.S. had.

GAZETTE: Was the U.S. stuck in a Cold War mentality that somehow prevented it from grasping Fidel's real dimension?

DOMINGUEZ: It was, to some extent. Fidel said publicly in 1961 that he was a socialist, and he then made clear he was a Marxist-Leninist. And that melted into the narrative of the Cold War. If it's communism, it must be bad. In the context of the Cold War, there is a way in which thinking among otherwise extremely smart people in the U.S. government, universities, and think tanks got impoverished. Then the thinking became "How do we cope with a Communist?" as opposed to "How do we cope with a guy who is a risk taker, who is brilliant, who is ambitious, who comes from a tiny, insignificant country but thinks that he could be the head of a world power?" The Soviet Union sent lots of troops to Afghanistan, and they couldn't win. The U.S. sent lots of troops to Vietnam, and they couldn't win. Fidel sent lots of troops to Africa, and he won the three wars he sent troops to fight.

GAZETTE: How was that possible?

DOMINGUEZ: Well, he didn't win them because he was a Communist. He won because he was good at what he was doing. He was a visionary, an ambitious leader, someone who was out to have a major impact on the world and had built a colossally impressive military establishment. Unlike the military establishments in the rest of Latin America, Cuba's was designed to be deployed overseas. The comparison is to U.S. troops, and troops in France, the U.K., and, in a slightly different way, Israel. Cuba was in that league.



Fidel Castro speaking at a rally in Havana, Cuba, 1978. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

GAZETTE: Castro had success in Africa, but what about Latin America? Although his influence was deeply felt in the region, there was never another Cuba to emerge.

DOMINGUEZ: He did fail in the way he thought he was going to have an impact in Latin America, and that was because he — and perhaps Ernesto “Che” Guevara, as the more intellectual and more analytical of the two, bears some responsibility here, as an interlocutor for Fidel — because he drew the wrong lessons about how it was that they won in Cuba in the 1950s.

GAZETTE: Tell us how the Cuban revolution really succeeded.

DOMINGUEZ: The mistake in the interpretation is that it was a bunch of guys who, holed up in a mountain in a rural area, defeat the incumbent regime. And the real story is that it was a much more complex set of forces, often not coordinated, that weakened the old regime. Many of those forces were from the inside: military corruption, conspiracies, and coup attempts, and many university students in the cities engaging in acts of civic resistance and political violence. It was overwhelmingly this urban protest and this internal weakening of the state that brought the regime down. What had happened in the mountains is that Fidel had been surrounded and protected by bodyguards. Everybody else, who might have replaced the old regime, got killed, [but] not him.

GAZETTE: Was Castro a hero or a villain?

DOMINGUEZ: He was a hero for some. I continue to meet people who are university professors, first-rate academics, who tell me they were poor when they were growing up. If you talk to someone who is older, it's not uncommon to hear them say, “I grew up poor. I learned to read when I was 35 years old, and my daughter now is Wow.” How couldn't you think he was a hero? Of course, you would. To me, one of the most

impressive statistical observations is that 20 years after he took power, and as a result of programs that were instituted, there were no differences by skin color in the likelihood of a newborn baby dying as an infant, and no differences by skin color in primary school completion. That's not the United States. That is not Brazil. That's not the case in Cuba today. Once again, there is inequality that is marked by color, but that's in part because things have become worse for Cubans in the last 25 years. But in the moment when he was able to do the kind of things he wanted to do, some of these outcomes were very impressive.

GAZETTE: But for all Castro's achievements, he ruled for almost 50 years. What kind of ruler was he?

DOMINGUEZ: To give you a sense of magnitude, at one point I was able to compare the number of political prisoners that Fidel admitted to holding to the political prisoners that the opposition in Chile under [leader Augustin] Pinochet claimed Pinochet was holding. So there is a bias in the comparison. It's very simple arithmetic, political prisoners per population. There is no peer. Cuba had many, many more political prisoners. Those who think he's a villain point to this. In Cuba, just like in Chile, torture becomes an administrative practice through the 1960s, lots of people died, and some died in prison. Others are formally executed through the application of the death penalty after trials that do not meet the standard of due process. Thousands of people were sent to prison for many years for crimes of opinion and association and remain in prison for far, far longer than in Pinochet's Chile. That's the ugly part.

GAZETTE: Let's talk now about the U.S. obsession with Cuba. Why did Cuba matter to the United States?

DOMINGUEZ: At the beginning, it mattered a great deal. One reason is, "Who do they think they are? This doesn't happen to the United States." An expression used by many U.S. presidents for the past couple of centuries was that Cuba was "our backyard." Secondly, there were concerns over expropriation of U.S. companies, at the time the largest expropriation that anybody had ever conducted against U.S. companies anywhere in the world. And thirdly, of course, it becomes part of the Cold War because Cuba becomes a public ally of the Soviet Union. In addition to that, Castro starts mucking around, supporting revolutions, and deploying troops across the Atlantic Ocean. It's not irrational for the U.S. to say, "You can't take the property of our companies without compensating. We don't want an ally of the Soviet Union to be deploying troops," and so on. There is a lot of rationality to what became the U.S. response, including the application of economic sanctions, for many years. The problem is that the U.S. policy toward Cuba since 1990 stopped being a rationalist policy. It's similar to a bullfight when the bull sees red.

GAZETTE: The U.S. financed an invasion of Cuba, which failed, but it also funded several assassination attempts against Castro. What was the rationale of that?

DOMINGUEZ: The U.S. government thought at the start, "We're going to invade, we're going to assassinate Castro, we're going to do sabotage, impose economic sanctions, and get rid of him." Years later, the U.S. stopped invasions and assassination attempts but decided to make Castro's life difficult by sustained economic sanctions. When the

policy gets off the rational scale is when these economic sanctions continue after the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the collapse, it's just, "We have you and your regime over a barrel, and we're going to do anything possible to get rid of you." And that's no longer a rational strategy. The gap between ends and means is enormous. One may think that Cuba's political regime should change, but at the cost of economic sanctions, tougher than the U.S. had imposed on Iran. Why? It backfired enormously because it became the thing Castro could say to Cubans, "The fault is not in ourselves, the fault is in U.S. economic sanctions." And the U.S. kept ratcheting up sanctions in the 1990s, culminating with the enactment of the Helms-Burton Act in 1996, which codifies the economic sanctions. Castro ordered it to be translated into Spanish and read over national radio and television to tell Cubans, "See? It's true. They want you to starve to death. It's not me."

GAZETTE: And now that President-elect Donald Trump has said he might reverse President Barack Obama's opening to Cuba, what are the risks of that?

DOMINGUEZ: Let's take a U.S.-Cuba agreement by which the Cuban government commits itself to doing as much as it can to prevent undocumented migrants from leaving Cuba. When someone manages to get on a boat and is caught by the U.S. Coast Guard, the Coast Guard takes him to a Cuban port and the Cuban government receives him. Trump could reverse this policy, and therefore, let all the undocumented migrants wash onto the southern Florida shores. Isn't that a great idea? Another possible scenario is this: Since 2002, the U.S. has exported to Cuba \$5.25 billion of agricultural products, and almost all of it comes from Republican red states. The president could, of course, reverse that policy and say to the governors and the agribusiness companies that they cannot do it anymore. Trump used Twitter to say he'd reverse the deal. What deal is he talking about? There is not a deal. There are many, and these two examples are older. Take a recent one. Yesterday, for the first time since 1961, American airlines landed a scheduled flight that went from Miami to Havana. Trump could reverse that deal. What is that deal? It's a civil aviation agreement where the two governments solemnly affirm their sovereignty, and only U.S. airlines are flying. Cubana de Aviacion is not flying to the U.S. It's the part where a mercantilist like Trump would say, "This is great for U.S. airlines, not for the other guys." So what does he want to reverse? Does he want to reverse the permission to Starwood Hotels to manage three hotels because he'd like Trump hotels to open up? The key point is that a lot of what has been built cooperatively between the U.S. and Cuba serves not just the U.S. agenda but the Trump agenda. No government in the world does what Cuba does with regard to migration. That's a poster child for Trump policy on migration. The Cubans do whatever they can to enforce and effect the kind of migration policy Trump wants. How could he possibly not see this?

GAZETTE: In a famous speech, Castro said after his first attempt to overthrow the [U.S.-supported Fulgencio] Batista regime, "History will absolve me." What do you think? Will history absolve Castro?

DOMINGUEZ: The history part remains to be seen. I do not absolve Castro because Castro's personal responsibility for some of the awful things that occurred under his rule is really large. I give him a great deal of credit for the good things that happened during his presidency. But if in the end one needs to draw a balance sheet, I cannot justify the terrible things that occurred at his command. Many people will absolve him. Not me. But

what's interesting about this man is his complexity. What I wish in the Cuba course I teach is for students to understand the complexity of this man. The point of the course is to get them to think. One can make a very rational, even emotionally moving, argument as to why Fidel was such a great president. The students can come to the judgment on their own that he was or he wasn't. But my role is not to indoctrinate them. My role is to help them to think.

GAZETTE: So, will Castro keep being a polarizing figure for the years to come?

DOMINGUEZ: Probably. And it'd be a more interesting history book if it conveys a sense of a more polarizing figure.

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Quotable

QUOTES

Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz (13 August 1926 - 25 November 2016)

was a Cuban politician and communist revolutionary who governed the Republic of Cuba as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba from 1961 to 2011, Prime Minister from 1959 to 1976 and then as President from 1976 to 2008. A Marxist-Leninist and Cuban nationalist, Castro also served as the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba from 1961 until 2011. Under his administration, Cuba became a one-party communist state, while industry and business were nationalized and state socialist reforms were implemented throughout society.

- **I feel my belief in [sacrifice](#) and [struggle](#) getting stronger.** I despise the kind of [existence](#) that clings to the miserly trifles of [comfort](#) and [self-interest](#). I think that a man should not live beyond the age when he begins to deteriorate, when the flame that lighted the brightest moment of his life has weakened.
 - Letter from prison (19 December 1953)
- The [26th of July Movement](#) is not a tendency within the party, it is the revolutionary apparatus of Chibas's organization, a grass-roots movement, from which it emerged to fight against the dictator, while the [Ortodoxo Party](#) was lying helpless and divided. From then on, our revolutionary [thesis](#) has been the thesis of our party's [masses](#); they had

expressed their feelings unequivocally, from then on, the masses and the leaders have gone different ways.

- Statement, Mexico, March 18th, 1956 as published in Carlos Franqui's *Diary of the Cuban Revolution* (1976), pp. 100.
- **The 26th of July Movement is the revolutionary organization of the humble, by the humble, for the humble. The 26th July Movement is the hope of redemption for the Cuban [working class](#), who can hope for nothing from the political cliques; it is the hope of land for the [peasants](#) who live like pariahs in the country whose [freedom](#) their grandfathers won; it is the hope of going back home for the emigres who had to leave their country, here they could not live or work, and it is the hope of daily [bread](#) for the [hungry](#) and of [justice](#) for the forgotten.**
 - Statement, Mexico, March 18th, 1956 as published in Carlos Franqui's *Diary of the Cuban Revolution* (1976), pp. 100-101.
- [Weapons](#) for what? (*¿Armas, para qué?*) To fight against whom? Against the revolutionary government, that has the support of the whole people? ... Weapons for what? *Hiding* weapons for what? To blackmail the President of the Republic? To threaten to break the peace here? To create organizations of [gangsters](#)? Is it that we are going to return to gangsterism? Is it that we will return to daily shootouts in the capital? Weapons for what?
 - [Speech in Havana \(8 January 1959\)](#)
- I am not a [dictator](#), and I do not think I will become one. I will not maintain power with a [machine gun](#).
 - *I Won't Be a Dictator*, interview with Ruth Lloyd (January 1959), printed in *The Spokesman-Review* (24 May 1959)
- Men do not shape [destiny](#). Destiny produces the man for the hour.
 - *I Won't Be a Dictator* (1959)
- The American people, I think, is good people. Yes, they are—they have not to charge with the guilty of all the lies, that publicity...the people of [United States](#) is good people, harmonious people, wonderful people. United States people is very good people.
 - [Fidel Castro after visiting the United Nations in New York \(1959\)](#)
- **I am not a [communist](#) and neither is the revolutionary movement, but we do not have to say that we are anti-Communists just to fawn on foreign powers.**
 - Resignation announcement (17 July 1959)
- **The first duty of the revolutionaries is to tell the truth. Fooling the people, promoting illusions, always brings the worst consequences**, and I believe that the people should be warned against excessive optimism. How did the Red Army win the war? By telling the truth. How did the [dictatorship](#) lose the war? By deceiving the soldiers.
 - Camp Columbia, Havana (Jan. 8th, 1959), *Fidel Castro Reader*, pp. 133
- **A revolution is not a trail of [roses](#).... A revolution is a fight to the death between the [future](#) and the [past](#).**
 - [Speech on the second anniversary of the triumph of the revolution \(2 January 1961\)](#)

- Fellow workers and peasants, this is the [socialist](#) and [democratic revolution](#) of the working people, with the working people, and for the working people. And for this revolution of the working people, by the working people, and for the working people we are prepared to give our lives.
- If we had paused to tell the people that we were [Marxist-Leninists](#) while we were on Pico Turquino and not yet strong, it is possible that we would never have been able to descend to the plains.
 - Speech on the anniversary of the *Granma* landing (2 December 1961)
- I am a Marxist-Leninist, and I will be a Marxist-Leninist until the last days of my life.
 - Speech on the anniversary of the *Granma* landing (2 December 1961)
 - Variant translation: I am a Marxist-Leninist and will be one until the day I die.
 - As quoted in "[Chavez Would Abolish Presidential Term Limit](#)" in [The Washington Post](#) (11 January 2007)
- It is necessary that each [Marxist-Leninist](#) understand that he can contribute to Marxism-Leninism with an atom of his experience, that every solution he finds, every experience he acquires, in the act of solving a problem, will be one more experience with which he enriches Marxism-Leninism, because Marxism-Leninism has been enriched so much precisely by the experience of millions and millions of Marxist-Leninists acting in the reality of life.
 - [Speech \(20 December 1961\)](#)
- We believe that [Marxism-Leninism](#) is an incontestable truth.
 - [Speech pronounced in Havana \(13 March 1962\)](#)
- [Kim Il-sung](#), one of the most prominent, bright and heroic socialist leaders of the present day, whose history is one of the most beautiful thing a revolutionary may have written in the service of the cause of [socialism](#).
 - [Speech \(19 April 1966\)](#)
- [Che](#) brought the ideas of [Marxism-Leninism](#) to their freshest, purest, most revolutionary expression.
 - [Speech \(18 October 1967\)](#)
- The death of a fighter is not a reason to [mourn](#), if we believe, as we have always believed, as our people have believed and as revolutionaries of every era have believed, that no true man, no true revolutionary dies in vain.
 - [Speech \(12 January 1968\)](#)
- [Marx](#) and [Lenin](#) represent precisely the two human personalities that will mark the passage between prehistory and the history of mankind.
 - [Speech \(22 April 1970\)](#)
- [Fascism](#), with its violence, gets rid of everything: it attacks [universities](#), it closes them and crushes them; it attacks [intellectuals](#), represses them and persecutes them; it attacks [political parties](#); it attacks [trade union organizations](#); it attacks all mass and cultural organizations. Therefore, **nothing is more [violent](#), more retrograde and more illegal than fascism.**

- [Speech \(2 December 1971\)](#)
- [Marxism-Leninism](#) is an explanation of historical events; Marxism-Leninism is a guide for action, Marxism-Leninism is the [ideology](#) of the [proletariat](#), which must guide, make its action conscious to overthrow exploiters, to establish a classless society.
 - [Speech \(2 December 1971\)](#)
- Marxism-Leninism is the ideology of the working class, the most complete political doctrine, the most accurate explanation of social and historical problems.
 - [Speech \(7 June 1972\)](#)
- Marxism-Leninism is the denial of the [exploitation](#) of man by man, that has been precisely the source of crimes, [wars](#), [oppressions](#) and calamities that [humanity](#) has suffered over millennia.
 - [Speech \(26 July 1972\)](#)
- The figure of [Lenin](#) is a giant in [history](#) and his luminous ideas represents the common heritage of revolutionary fighters in every corner of the [Earth](#).
 - [Speech \(22 December 1972\)](#)
- Comrade [Ho Chi Minh](#), in a genius way, combined the struggle for national independence with the struggle for the rights of the masses oppressed by the exploiters and the [feudals](#). He saw that the path was to combine the patriotic feelings of peoples with the need of freedom from social exploitation. National liberation and social liberation were the two pillars on which his doctrine was based. Furthermore, he saw that underdeveloped countries, in those conditions because of [capitalism](#), could make a leap in history, building [their economy](#) along the path of socialism, saving themselves from the sacrifices and the horrors of capitalism.
 - [Speech \(12 September 1973\)](#)
- President [Ho Chi Minh](#), understanding the extraordinary historical importance and the consequences of the glorious [October Revolution](#), and assimilating [Lenin's](#) luminous thought, saw clearly that in Marxism-Leninism we could find the teaching and the path that had to be followed to find a solution to the problem of the peoples oppressed by colonialism.
 - [Speech \(12 September 1973\)](#)
- [Fascism](#) appears in the world precisely after the [October Revolution](#); fascism appears in the world as a tool against Marxism-Leninism. **Capitalist and [imperialist](#) countries created the conditions for the rise of fascism in the world; and the whole fascist campaign, since its first appearance in [Europe](#), was based on anti-communism, on communists' slaughter and on the destruction of the [Soviet Union](#).**
 - [Speech \(8 May 1975\)](#)
- [Marxism-Leninism](#) is ultimately deeply internationalist and, at the same time, deeply patriotic.
 - [Speech \(2 December 1976\)](#)
- [Democratic Korea](#), its leaders and its people will always live in our feelings of revolutionaries, patriots and fighters for the triumph of socialism.
 - [Speech \(11 March 1986\)](#)

- Marxism-Leninism is the richest doctrine in ideas of [justice](#), [freedom](#), [equality](#), [fraternity](#) among men.
 - [Speech \(22 December 1991\)](#)
- I propose the immediate launching of a [nuclear strike](#) on the United States. The Cuban people are prepared to sacrifice themselves for the cause of the destruction of imperialism and the victory of [world revolution](#).
 - As quoted in "Castro Wanted a Nuclear Strike" in *The New York Times* (October 23, 1992)
- The [Alliance for Progress](#) is an alliance between one [millionaire](#) and many [beggars](#).
 - Interview with C. L. Sulzberger, *The New York Times* (November 7, 1964), p. 26.
- [Warfare](#) is a means and not an end. Warfare is a tool of revolutionaries. **The important thing is the revolution!** The important thing is the revolutionary cause, revolutionary ideas, revolutionary objectives, revolutionary sentiments, revolutionary virtues!
 - [Speech at the memorial service](#) of [Che Guevara](#) (8 October 1967)
- If we wanted to express how we'd like our revolutionary combatants, our militants, our men, to be, we should say without hesitation of any kind: that they be like [Che](#)! If we wanted to express how we'd want the men of future generations to be, we should say: that they be like Che! If we wanted to say how we'd want our children to be educated, we should say without faltering: we want them to be educated in Che's spirit! If we wanted a model of a man, a model of a man who does not belong to this time, but who belongs to the future instead, I'd heartily say that this model without a single stain on his conduct, attitude or behavior, is Che! If we want to express how we want our children to be, we must say with all the heart of vehement revolutionaries: we want them to be like Che!
 - [Speech \(18 October 1967\)](#)
- Scorn relations with the imperialist [Government of the United States](#), a [Government](#) of [genocide](#) and decadence

..

We have supported, we are supporting and we shall support revolutionary movements in [Latin America](#).

..

We feel very well outside the [O.A.S.](#), in fact better than inside. The O.A.S. is an organization that is bound to disappear.

 - 19 April 1971 in Havana, according to [20 April 1971 New York Times article](#)
- You know my eyes are not very strong. So every day to make them stronger I force myself to look at the sun. I find it very hard. But do you know what I find harder? That is to look into the blue of your eyes.
 - Early in 1976, speaking to [Margaret Trudeau](#), according to [page 317 of Just Watch Me: The Life of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, 1968-2000](#) by John English.
- We have a theoretical concept of the Revolution which is a dictatorship of the exploited against the exploiters.
 - As quoted in *With Fidel : A Portrait of Castro and Cuba* (1976) by Frank Mankiewicz and Kirby Jones, p. 83

- Variant: The revolution is a dictatorship of the exploited against the exploiters.
 - As quoted in *Words of Wisdom : From the Greatest Minds of All Time* (2004) edited by Mick Farren, p. 138
- **What was [fascism](#) in [Italy](#), in [Germany](#)? The exaltation of [racial prejudices](#).** Instead of fighting racial prejudice, which is what a revolution does, fascism exalts [prejudice](#) and turns it into [hatred](#).
 - [Speech pronounced at the centenary of the Baragua protest \(15 March 1978\)](#)
- With what moral authority can they speak of [human rights](#) — the rulers of a nation in which the millionaire and beggar coexist; the [Indian](#) is exterminated; the [black man](#) is [discriminated](#) against; the [woman](#) is [prostituted](#); and the great masses of [Chicanos](#), [Puerto Ricans](#), and Latin Americans are scorned, exploited, and humiliated? How can they do this — the bosses of an [empire](#) where the [mafia](#), [gambling](#), and [child prostitution](#) are imposed; where the [CIA](#) organizes plans of global subversion and [espionage](#), and [the Pentagon](#) creates [neutron bombs](#) capable of preserving material assets and wiping out human beings; an empire that supports reaction and counter-revolution all over the world; that protects and promotes the exploitation by [monopolies](#) of the [wealth](#) and the [human resources](#) of whole continents, unequal exchange, a protectionist policy, an incredible waste of natural resources, and a system of [hunger](#) for the world?
 - [Speech on the 25th anniversary of the Moncada Barracks attack \(26 July 1978\)](#)
- The [economic management and planning system](#) was not set up so that we can play at capitalism; and some people are shamefully playing at capitalism; we know this, we see it, and this must be set right.
 - *Rectifying the Errors of the Cuban Revolution* (1986)
- **It is really impressive what a filth system capitalism is**, that can't guarantee its own people [employment](#), nor [health](#), nor adequate [education](#); that cannot prevent [youth](#) from being corrupted by [drugs](#), [gamble](#), and all kind of [vices](#).
 - [Speech \(13 March 1991\)](#)
- We cannot ignore [Hiroshima and Nagasaki](#), with the useless use of [nuclear weapons](#), an absolutely unnecessary use that, in any case, could have been employed against some military facilities that fell, however, on civilian populations of hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, to establish the era of the atomic terror in the world.
 - [Speech \(25 November 1994\)](#)
- *Las ideas no necesitan ni de las armas, en la medida en que sean capaces de conquistar a las grandes masas.* (Ideas do not need weapons, to the extent that they can convince the great masses.)
 - [Speech at the Conference on Foreign Debt in Latin America and the Caribbean \(3 August 1985\)](#)
- I never perceived a contradiction in the political revolutionary field between the ideas I maintained and the idea of that symbol, that extraordinary figure who had been so familiar to me since I began to reason.
 - On [Jesus Christ](#), as quoted in *Fidel and Religion* (1985) by Frei Betto

- Let us yield a bit. Let us grant socialism a few more years. Socialism is so obsolete, it is dying by itself.... Did I say socialism? I assure you on my honor this was not a mental slip. This was a slip of the tongue. Do not forget that. **Capitalism—and I say it with such *gusto*—capitalism is so obsolete that it is dying by itself.**
 - [Comments on Latin American Debt \(15 September 1985\)](#)
- **They talk about the failure of socialism but where is the success of capitalism in [Africa](#), [Asia](#) and [Latin America](#)?**
 - [Statement of 1991, during the fall of USSR.](#)
- Capitalism has neither the capacity, nor the moral, nor the [ethics](#), nor the will to solve the problems of [poverty](#).
 - [Speech \(26 July 1991\)](#)
- Capitalism produces beasts, socialism produces men.
 - [Speech \(22 December 1991\)](#)
- As I have said before, the ever more sophisticated weapons piling up in the arsenals of the wealthiest and the mightiest can kill the illiterate, the ill, the poor and the hungry but they cannot kill ignorance, illnesses, poverty or hunger.
 - [Speech at the International Conference on Financing for Development \(March 2002\)](#)
- [Ho Chi Minh](#) was, is and will be an eternal example.
 - [Speech \(6 March 2003\)](#)
- **This country ... abounds in that Cuba is a heaven in the spiritual sense of the word, and we prefer to die in [heaven](#) than serve in hell.**
 - Speech at the First World Congress on Literacy (2 February 2005) paraphrasing a line in [John Milton's *Paradise Lost*](#); quoted in *Granma*
- Capitalism is a system based on blind, destructive and tyrannical laws imposed on the human species.
 - [Writings \(10 November 2007\)](#)
- When I was a young boy, my father taught me that to be a good [Catholic](#), I had to [confess](#) at [church](#) if I ever had impure thoughts about a [girl](#). That very evening, I had to rush to confess my sin. And the next night, and the next. **After a week, I decided [religion](#) wasn't for me.**
 - As quoted in *The Atheist's Bible* (2007) edited by Joan Konner, p. 62
- Soon, I'll be like all the others. The time will come for all of us, but the ideas of the Cuban Communists will remain as proof on this planet that if they are worked at with fervor and dignity, they can produce the material and cultural goods that human beings need, and we need to fight without a truce to obtain them.
 - [Speech after Raul was re-elected as head of the Communist party](#)
- They corrupt the morals of young girls and destroy posters of Che! What do they think? That this is a [bourgeois liberal](#) regime? NO! There is nothing liberal in us! We are [collectivists](#)! We are communists! There will be no [Prague Spring](#) here!
 - As quoted in [Exposing the Real Che Guevara: And the Useful Idiots Who Idolize Him](#) (August 2008), by Humberto Fontova

- **Revolution is the sense of the historical moment; it is changing everything that must be changed;** it is full equality and freedom; it is being treated and treating others like human beings; it is emancipating ourselves, by ourselves and with our very own efforts; it is challenging the dominant powerful forces within and outside of the social and national arena; it is defending the values one believes in at the cost of any sacrifice; it is [modesty](#), [selflessness](#), [altruism](#), [solidarity](#) and [heroism](#); it is fighting with [audacity](#), intelligence and [realism](#); it is never telling a lie or violating ethical principles; it is the profound conviction that there is no force on earth that can crush truth and ideas. Revolution is unity, it is independence, it is fighting for our dreams of justice for Cuba and the world that is the basis of our [patriotism](#), our socialism and our [internationalism](#).
 - As quoted in [Speech by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the mass rally called by the Cuban youths, students and workers on the occasion of the International Labor Day at the Revolution Square](#) (May 1, 2000)

There is not Communism or Marxism, but representative democracy and social justice in a well-planned economy

- The [USSR self-destructed](#) in an incredible way. The responsibility for that self-destruction undoubtedly lies in the hands of the country's leaders, those who led that nation. Now, some of them were aware they were destroying it and others were not. That is what I was trying to say, more or less, and we saw it all from the beginning. I cannot say [Gorbachev](#) played a role in which he was aware of the destruction of the USSR because I have no doubt that Gorbachev intended to fight to improve socialism. We approved of Soviet efforts to improve socialism in the USSR. But we could not approve of, and never would have agreed to, not only the destruction of socialism in the USSR, but also the destruction of the USSR itself. That inflicted terrible damage on all peoples of the world and created a bad situation for the [Third World](#) in particular. Imperialism would have been able to disintegrate the Soviet Union, had the Soviets not destroyed themselves, had those responsible for the strategies and tactics and for the country's political and government policies not destroyed the country. In other words, socialism did not die from natural causes: it was a suicide, socialism was murdered. That is what I meant.
 - [\(1992\)](#)
- I believe [Stalin](#) made big mistakes but also showed great wisdom. In my opinion, blaming Stalin for everything that occurred in the [Soviet Union](#) would be historical simplism, because no man by himself could have created certain conditions. It would be the same as giving Stalin all the credit for what the USSR once was. That is impossible! I believe that the efforts of millions and millions of heroic people contributed to the USSR's development and to its relevant role in the world in favor of hundreds of millions of people.
 - [\(1992\)](#)
- [Xi Jinping](#) is one of the strongest and most capable revolutionary leaders I have met in my life.
 - Xi Jinping es uno de los líderes revolucionarios más firme y capaz que he conocido en mi vida.
 - [Holocausto palestino en Gaza \(2014\)](#)

History Will Absolve Me (October 16th, 1953)

- I want to be fair above all else, so I can't blame all the [soldiers](#) for the shameful crimes that stain a few evil and treacherous [military](#) men. But every honorable and upright soldier who loves his career and his uniform is duty bound to demand and to fight for the cleansing of this guilt, to avenge this betrayal and to see the guilty are punished. Otherwise the soldier's uniform will forever be marked of infamy instead of pride.
 - *Fidel Castro Reader*, p. 61
- It is a fundamental principle of criminal law that an imputed offense must correspond exactly to the type of crime described by law. If no law applies exactly to the point in question, then there can be no offense.
 - *Ibid.* p. 53
- Let me tell you a story: Once there was a [republic](#). It had its [constitution](#), its laws, its freedoms, a [president](#), a [congress](#) and [courts of law](#). Everyone could assemble, associate, speak and write with complete freedom.
 - *ibid.*, p. 89-901
- Poor country! One morning the citizens woke up dismayed; **under the cover of darkness, while the people slept, the ghost of the past had conspired and had seized the citizenry by its hands, its feet, and its neck.** That grip, those claws were familiar: those jaws, those death-dealing scythes, those boots. No, it was no nightmare; it was a sad and terrible reality: A man named Fulgencio Batista had just perpetrated the appalling crime that no one had expected.
 - *ibid*, p. 90
- I sincerely believe revolution to be the source of legal right; but the nocturnal armed assault of March 10 could never be considered a revolution.
 - *ibid*, p 92
- I now come to the close of my defense, but I will not end it as lawyers usually do, asking that the accused be freed. I cannot ask for freedom for myself while my companeros are already suffering in the ignominious prison of the Isle of Pines. Send me there to join them and to share their fate. It is understandable that honest people should be dead or in prison in a republic where the president is a criminal and a thief.
 - *ibid*, p. 104
- *I know that imprisonment will be harder for me than it has ever been for anyone, filled with cowardly threats and hideous cruelty. But I do not fear prison, as I do not fear the fury of the miserable tyrant who took the lives of 70 of my companeros. **Condemn me, it does not matter: history will absolve me.***
 - *ibid*, p. 105

Cuba was a colony of the United States. As far as the map was concerned, this we not the case: our country had a different color from that of the United States. But in reality Cuba was a colony of the United States..... Puerto Rico fell — heroic Puerto Rico, which had begun its struggle for independence at the same time as Cuba. The Philippine Islands fell, and several other possessions...

At the United Nations (1960)

- Much has been said of the universal desire for peace, which is the desire of all peoples and, therefore, the desire of our people too, but the peace which the world wishes to preserve is the peace that we Cuban have been missing for quite some time.... Are we, the Cuban delegates, the representatives of the worst type of Government in the world? Do we, the representatives of the Cuban delegation, deserve the maltreatment we have

received? And why our delegation? Cuba has sent many delegations to the [United Nations](#), and yet it was we who were singled out for such exceptional measures: confinement to the Island of [Manhattan](#); notice to all hotels not to rent rooms to us, hostility and, under the pretence of security, isolation.

- Now, to the problem of Cuba. Perhaps some of you are well aware of the facts, perhaps others are not. It all depends on the sources of information, but, undoubtedly, the problem of Cuba, born within the last two years, is a new problem for the world.
- For many, Cuba was something of an appendix of the United States. Even for many citizens of this country, Cuba was a colony of the United States. As far as the map was concerned, this was not the case: our country had a different color from that of the United States. But in reality Cuba was a [colony](#) of the United States.. It was not because of its origins; the same men did not colonize the United States and Cuba. Cuba has a very different ethnic and cultural origin, and the difference was widened over the centuries.
- Cuba was the last country in [America](#) to free itself from [Spanish colonial rule](#), to cast off, with due respect to the representative of [Spain](#), the Spanish colonial yoke; and because it was the last, it also had to fight more fiercely.
- Spain had only one small possession left in America and it defended it with tooth and nail. Our people, small in numbers, scarcely a million inhabitants at that time, had to face alone, for almost thirty years, an army considered one of the strongest in [Europe](#)...
- For thirty years the [Cubans fought alone for their independence](#); thirty years of struggle that strengthened our love for freedom and independence.
- But Cuba was a fruit — according to the opinion of a [President of the United States](#) at the beginning of the past century, [John Adams](#) —, it was an [apple](#) hanging from the Spanish tree, destined to fall, as soon as it was ripe enough, into the hands of the United States.
- Spanish power had worn itself out in our country. Spain had neither the men nor the economic resources to continue the war in Cuba; Spain had been defeated. Apparently the apple was ripe, and the United States Government held out its open hands.
- Several apples fell in to the hands of the United States. Puerto Rico fell — heroic Puerto Rico, which had begun its struggle for independence at the same time as Cuba. The [Philippine Islands](#) fell, and several other possessions. However, the method of dominating our country could not be the same. Our country had struggled fiercely, and thus had gained the favour of world public opinion. Therefore, the method of taking our country had to be different.
- The Cubans who fought for our independence and at that very moment were giving their blood and their lives believed in good faith in the joint resolution of the [Congress of the United States](#) of April 20, 1898, which declared that "Cuba is, and by right ought to be, free and independent."... But that illusion was followed by a rude awakening. After two years of military occupation of our country, the unexpected happened... a new law was passed by the United States Congress... stated that the constitution of the Cuba must have an appendix under which the United States would be granted the right to intervene in Cuba's political affairs and, furthermore, to lease certain parts of Cuba for naval bases or coal supply station.

- ...Under a law passed by the legislative body of a foreign country, [Cuban's Constitution](#) had to contain an appendix with those provisions. Our legislators were clearly told that if they did not accept the amendment, the occupation forces would not be withdrawn. In other words, an agreement to grant another country the right to intervene and to lease naval bases was imposed by force upon my country by the legislative body of a foreign country... Then began the new colonization of our country, the acquisition of the best agricultural lands by United States firms, concessions of Cuban natural resources and mines, concessions of public utilities for exploitation purposes, commercial concessions of all types. These concessions, when linked with the constitutional right — constitutional by force — of intervention in our country, turned it from a Spanish colony into an American colony...
- The National General Assembly of the Cuban people condemns large scale landowning as a source of [poverty](#) for the peasant and a backward and inhuman system of agricultural production; it condemns starvation wages and the iniquitous exploitation of human work by illegitimate and privileged interests; it condemns illiteracy, the lack of teachers, of schools, doctor and hospitals; the lack of old-age security in the countries of America; it condemns discrimination against the [Negro](#) and the [Indian](#)'; it condemns the inequality and the [exploitation of women](#); it condemns political and military [oligarchies](#), which keep our peoples in poverty, prevent their [democratic](#) development and the full exercise of their [sovereignty](#); it condemns concessions of the natural resources of our countries as a policy of surrender which betrays the interests of the peoples; it condemns the governments which ignore the demands of their people in order to obey orders from abroad; it condemns the systematic deception of the people by mass communications media which serve the interests of the oligarchies and the policy of imperialist oppression; it condemns the monopoly held by news agencies, which are instruments of monopolist trusts and agents of such interests; it condemns the repressive laws which prevent the workers, the peasants, the students and the intellectuals, the great majorities in each country, from organizing themselves to fight for their social and national rights; it condemns the imperialist monopolies and enterprises which continually plunder our wealth, exploit our workers and peasants, bleed our economies to keep them in a backward state, and subordinate Latin American politics to their designs and interests.
- In short, The National General Assembly of the Cuban People condemns the exploitation of man by man, and the exploitation of underdeveloped countries by imperialists capital.
- Therefore, the National General Assembly of the Cuban People proclaims before America, and proclaims here before the world, the right of the peasants to the [land](#); the right of the workers to the fruits of their labor; the right of the [children](#) to education; the right of the sick to [medical care](#) and hospitalization; the right of young people to work; the right of students to free [vocational training](#) and scientific education; the right of Negroes, and Indians to full human dignity; the right of women to civil, social and political equality; the right of the elderly to security in their old age; the right of intellectuals, artists and scientists so fight through their works for a better world; the right of States to nationalize imperialist monopolies, thus rescuing their national wealth and resources; the right of nations to their full sovereignty; the right of peoples to convert their military fortresses into schools, and to arm their workers -- because in this we too have to be arms-conscious, to arm our people in defense against imperialist attacks -- their peasants, their students, their intellectuals, Negroes, Indians, [women](#), [young people](#), [old people](#), all the oppressed and exploited, so that they themselves can defend their rights and their destinies.

- Some people wanted to know what the policy of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba was. Very well, then, this is our policy. (ovation)

Words to Intellectuals (1961)

- This is not some special law or guideline for [artists](#) and [writers](#). It is a general principle for all citizens. It is a fundamental principle of the revolution. Counterrevolutionaries, that is, the enemies of the revolution, have no rights against the revolution, because the revolution has one right: the right to exist, the right to develop, and the right to be victorious.
- In other words: Within the revolution, everything; against the revolution, nothing. Against the revolution, nothing, because the revolution also has its rights, and the first right of the revolution is the right to exist, and no one can oppose the revolution's right to exist. Inasmuch as the revolution embodies the interests of the people, inasmuch as the revolution symbolizes the interests of the whole nation, no one can justly claim a right to oppose it.
- The revolution cannot seek to stifle art or culture since one of the goals and fundamental aims of the revolution is to develop art and culture, precisely so that art and culture truly become the patrimony of the people.
- Our conclusion is that the compañeros of the National Council of Culture are as concerned as all of you are about achieving the best conditions for the development of creative work by artists and intellectuals. It is the duty of the revolution and the revolutionary government to see that there is a highly qualified agency that can be relied upon to stimulate, encourage, develop and guide - yes, guide - that creative spirit.
- You have the opportunity to be more than spectators, you can be actors in the revolution, writing about it, expressing yourselves about it. And the generations to come, what will they ask of you? You might produce magnificent artistic works from a technical point of view, but if you were to tell someone from the future generation, 100 years from now, that a writer, an intellectual, lived in the era of the revolution and did not write about the revolution, and was not a part of the revolution, it would be difficult for a person in the future to understand this. In the years to come there will be so many people who will want to paint about the revolution, to write about the revolution, to express themselves on the revolution, compiling data and information in order to know what it was like, what happened, how we used to live.
 - *Fidel Castro Reader*, pp. 238

The Second Declaration of Havana (1962)

- **The capitalist system of production, once it had given all it was capable of giving, became an abysmal obstacle to the progress of humanity.**
- All reactionary classes in all historical epochs, when the antagonism between exploiters and exploited reaches its highest peak, presaging the arrival of a new social regime, have turned to the worst weapons of repression and calumny against their adversaries.
- Divisionism, a product of all kinds of prejudices, false ideas and lies; [sectarianism](#), [dogmatism](#), a lack of breadth in analyzing the role of each social layer, its parties, organization and leaders - these obstruct the necessary united actions of the democratic and progressive forces of our people.
- This epic before us is going to be written by the hungry Indian masses, the peasants without land, the exploited workers. It is going to be written by the progressive masses, the honest and brilliant intellectuals, who so greatly abound in our suffering Latin American lands. A struggle of masses and of ideas. An epic that will be carried forward by our peoples, mistreated and oppressed by imperialism; our peoples, unreckoned

with until today, who are now beginning to shake off their slumber. Imperialism considered us a weak and submissive flock; and now it begins to be terrified of that flock; a gigantic flock of 200 million Latin Americans in whom Yankee monopoly capitalism now sees its gravediggers.

- The anxiety felt today is an unmistakable symptom of rebellion. The very depths of a continent are profoundly moved, a continent that has witnessed four centuries of [slave](#), semi-slave, and feudal exploitation beginning with its aboriginal inhabitants and slaves brought from [Africa](#), up to the nuclei of nationalities that emerged later: white, black, mulatto, mestizo and Indian, who today are made brothers and sisters by scorn, humiliation and the Yankee yoke, and are brothers and sisters in their hope for a better tomorrow.
- At Punta del Este a great ideological battle unfolded between the Cuban Revolution and [Yankee imperialism](#). Who did they represent there, for whom did each speak? Cuba represented the people; the United States represented the monopolies. Cuba spoke for America's exploited masses; the United States for the exploiting, [oligarchical](#), and imperialist interests; Cuba for sovereignty; the United States for intervention; Cuba for the nationalization of foreign enterprises; the United States for new investments of foreign capital. Cuba for culture; the United States for [ignorance](#). Cuba for agrarian reform; the United States for great landed estates. Cuba for the [industrialization](#) of America; the United States for underdevelopment. Cuba for creative work; the United States for sabotage and counterrevolutionary terror practiced by its agents; the destruction of sugarcane fields and factories, the bombing by their pirate planes of the labor of a peaceful people. Cuba for the murdered [teachers](#); the United States for the [assassins](#). Cuba for [bread](#); the United States for [hunger](#). Cuba for equality; the United States for privilege and discrimination. Cuba for the truth; the United States for lies. Cuba for liberation; the United States for oppression. Cuba for the bright future of humanity; the United States for the past without hope. Cuba for the heroes who fell at Giron to save the country from foreign domination; the United States for mercenaries and traitors who serve the foreigner against their country. Cuba for peace among peoples; the United States for aggression and war. Cuba for socialism; the United States for capitalism.
- And to the Black? What "alliance" can the system of lynching and brutal exclusion of the Black offer to the fifteen million Negroes and fourteen million mulattoes of Latin America, who know with horror and rage that their brothers in the North cannot ride in the same vehicles as their white compatriots, nor attend the same schools, nor even die in the same hospitals?
- To the accusation that Cuba wants to export its revolution, we reply: **Revolutions are not exported, they are made by the people.**
 - p. 261
- For this great mass of humanity has said, "Enough!" and has begun to march. And their march of giants will not be halted until they conquer true independence = for which they have died in vain more than one. Today, however, those who die will die like the Cubans at the Bay of Pigs - they will die for their own, true, never-to-be-surrendered independence.
- Great as the epic struggle for Latin American independence was, heroic as that struggle was, today's generation of Latin Americans is called on to engage in an epic that is even greater and more decisive for humanity. That struggle was for liberation from the Spanish colonial power, from a decadent Spain invaded by the armies of Napoleon. **Today the battle cry is for liberation from the most powerful world imperialist center, from the strongest force of world imperialism, and to render humanity a greater than that rendered by our predecessors.**
 - *The Fidel Castro Reader*, p. 265

On Behalf of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries (1979)

Address to the United Nations General Assembly (12 October 1979)

- We are united in our determination to change the present system of [international relations](#), based as it is on injustice, inequality and oppression. In international politics we act as an independent world force.
- We aspire to a [new world order](#), one based on justice, fairness and peace; one that will replace the unjust and unequal system of prevailing today, in which, as the final summit declaration states: "Wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few powers whose wasteful economies are maintained by the exploitation of workers as well as by the transfer and plunder of the natural and other resources of the peoples of Africa, Latin America, Asia and other regions of the world."
- Human rights are very often spoken of, but we must also speak of humanity's rights. Why should some people go barefoot that others may travel in expensive cars? Why should some live only 35 years that others may live 70? Why should some be miserably poor that others may be exaggeratedly rich? I speak on behalf of the children of the world who do not even have a piece of bread. I speak on behalf of the sick who lack medicine. I speak to you on behalf of those who have been denied the right to life and human dignity.

University of Havana address (2005)

Here is a conclusion I've come to after many years: among all the [errors](#) we may have committed, the greatest of them all was that we [believed](#) that someone really [knew](#) something about [socialism](#), or that someone actually knew how to build socialism. It seemed to be a sure [fact](#), as well-known as the [electrical system](#) conceived by those who thought they were experts in electrical systems. Whenever they said: "That's the formula", we thought they knew.

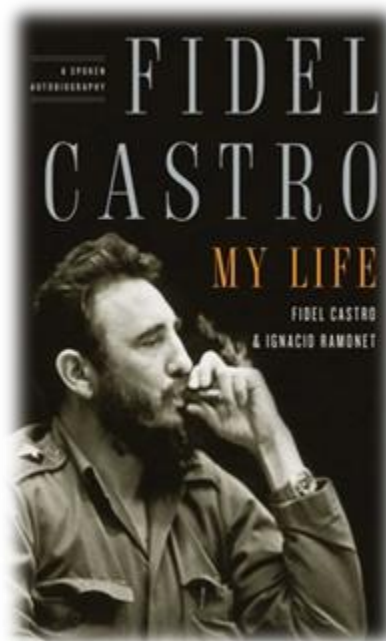
Speech at the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of his admission to University of Havana (17 November 2005)

- **I would dare say that today this species is facing a very real and true [danger](#) of [extinction](#), and no one can be sure, listen to this well, no one can be sure that it will survive this danger.**
Well, the fact that the species would not survive was discussed about 2,000 years ago. I remember that when I was a student I heard of the [Apocalypse](#), a [book](#) of [prophecy](#) in [the Bible](#). Apparently, 2000 years ago someone realized that this weak species could one day disappear.
- We are speaking of life, because whenever we speak of universities, we speak of life.
What are you? If I were asked that question right now, I would have to say that you are life, you are symbols of life.
- **Man is born [egotistical](#), a result of the conditioning of nature. [Nature](#) fills us with instincts; it is education that fills us with virtues.** Nature makes us do things instinctively; one of these is the instinct for survival which can lead to infamy, while on the other side, our conscience can lead us to great acts of heroism. It doesn't matter what each one of us is like, how different we are from each other, but when we unite we become one.

It is amazing that in spite of the differences between human beings, they can become as one in a single instant or they can be millions, and they can be a million strong just through their ideas. Nobody followed the Revolution as a cult to anyone or because they felt personal sympathy with any one person. It is only by embracing certain values and ideas that an entire people can develop the same willingness to make sacrifices of any one of those who loyally and sincerely try to lead them toward their destiny.

- **Here is a conclusion I've come to after many years: among all the errors we may have committed, the greatest of them all was that we believed that someone really knew something about socialism, or that someone actually knew how to build socialism.** It seemed to be a sure fact, as well-known as the electrical system conceived by those who thought they were experts in electrical systems. Whenever they said: "That's the formula", we thought they knew. Just as if someone is a physician. You are not going to debate anemia, or intestinal problems, or any other condition with a physician; nobody argues with the physician. You can think that he is a good doctor or a bad one, you can follow his advice or not, but you won't argue with him. Which of us would argue with a doctor, or a mathematician, or a historian, or an expert in literature or in any other subject? But we must be idiots if we think, for example, that economy is an exact and eternal science and that it existed since the days of Adam and Eve, and I offer my apologies to the thousands of economists in our country.
- **All sense of dialectics is lost when someone believes that today's economy is identical to the economy 50 or 100 or 150 years ago, or that it is identical to the one in Lenin's day or to the time when Karl Marx lived.** Revisionism is a thousand miles away from my mind and I truly revere Marx, Engels and Lenin.

(☺)(☺)(☺)(☺)(☺)



<https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Fidel-Castro-My-Life/Ignacio-Ramonet/9781416562337>

About The Book

The intimate and highly revealing life story
of the world's longest-serving, most charismatic,
and controversial head
of state in modern times.

Fidel Castro was a dictatorial pariah to some and a hero and inspiration for many of the world's poor, defiantly charting an independent and revolutionary path for Cuba over nearly half a century. Numerous attempts were made to get Castro to tell his own story. But only in the twilight of his years was he prepared to set out the details of his remarkable biography for the world to read before his death in 2016. This book is nothing less than his living testament.

In these pages, Castro narrates a compelling chronicle that spans the harshness of his elementary school teachers; the early failures of the revolution; his intense comradeship with Che Guevara and their astonishing, against-all-odds victory over the dictator Batista; the Cuban perspective on the Bay of Pigs and the ensuing missile crisis; the active role of Cuba in African independence movements (especially its large military involvement in fighting apartheid South Africa in Angola); his relations with prominent public figures such as Boris Yeltsin, Pope John Paul II, and Saddam Hussein; and his dealings with no less than ten successive American presidents, from Eisenhower to George W. Bush.

Castro talks proudly of increasing life expectancy in Cuba; of the half million students in Cuban universities; and of the training of seventy thousand Cuban doctors nearly half of whom work abroad, assisting the poor in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. He confronts a number of thorny issues, including democracy and human rights, discrimination toward homosexuals, and the presence of the death penalty on Cuban statute books. Along the way he shares intimacies about more personal matters: the benevolent strictness of his father, his successful attempt to give up cigars, his love of Ernest Hemingway's novels, and his calculation that by not shaving he saves up to ten working days each year.

Drawing on more than one hundred hours of interviews with Ignacio Ramonet, a knowledgeable and trusted interlocutor, this spoken autobiography will stand as the definitive record of an extraordinary life lived in turbulent times.

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Death and State Funeral

Fidel Castro


https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_and_state_funeral_of_Fidel_Castro

Former [first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba](#) and [president](#) of the [Council of State](#), Fidel Castro died of [natural causes](#) at 22:29 (CST) on the evening of 25 November 2016, at the age of 90. His brother, [Raúl Castro](#), who was president of the Council of State at the time, announced Fidel's death on state television. One of the most controversial political leaders of his era, Castro both inspired and dismayed people across the world during his lifetime. The London [Observer](#) stated that the only thing that his "enemies and admirers" agreed upon was that he was "a towering figure" in world affairs who "transformed a small [Caribbean](#) island into a major force in world affairs". [The Daily Telegraph](#) noted that across the world he was "either praised as a brave champion of the people, or derided as a power-mad dictator." Castro's body was cremated and his ashes were interred in [Santiago de Cuba](#) on 4 December 2016, and hundreds of thousands of Cubans commemorated the event.











Foreign dignitaries attending the state funeral

















Most states sent delegations led by high or mid-ranking officials to the funeral; many African and Latin American states sent delegations led by presidents or prime ministers. The funeral was attended by 30 heads of state and government, two multilateral leaders and eight former leaders.




Heads of multilateral organizations

 African Union	President	Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma
World Federation of Trade Unions	Secretary-General	George Mavrikos

Heads of state and government

 Antigua and Barbuda	Prime Minister	Gaston Browne
 Bahamas	Prime Minister	Perry Christie
 Bolivia	President	Evo Morales
 Canada	Governor General	David Johnston
 Cape Verde	President	Jorge Carlos Fonseca
 Colombia	President	Juan Manuel Santos
 Congo	President	Denis Sassou Nguesso
 Dominica	Prime Minister	Roosevelt Skerrit
 Ecuador	President	Rafael Correa
 El Salvador	President	Salvador Sánchez Cerén

 Equatorial Guinea	President	Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo
 Ethiopia	President	Mulatu Teshome
 Greece	Prime Minister	Alexis Tsipras
 Guyana	Prime Minister	Moses Nagamootoo
 Haiti	President	Jocelerme Privert
 Honduras	President	Juan Orlando Hernández
 Jamaica	Prime Minister	Andrew Holness
 Kenya	President	Uhuru Kenyatta
 Mexico	President	Enrique Peña Nieto
 Namibia	President	Hage Geingob
 Nicaragua	President	Daniel Ortega
 Panama	President	Juan Carlos Varela
 Saint Lucia	Prime Minister	Allen Chastanet
 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Prime Minister	Ralph Gonsalves
 South Africa	President	Jacob Zuma
 Suriname	President	Dési Bouterse

 Uganda	Prime Minister	Ruhakana Rugunda
 Venezuela	President	Nicolás Maduro
 Zimbabwe	President	Robert Mugabe

Government representatives and others

 Algeria	President of the Council of the Nation	Abdelkader Bensalah
 Angola	Vice President MPLA Secretary ^[37]	Manuel Vicente Paulo Kassoma
 Argentina	Minister of Foreign Relations	Susana Malcorra
 Belarus	Chief of the Presidential Administration	Viktor Sheiman
 Belize	Deputy Prime Minister	Patrick Faber
 Brazil	Minister of Foreign Relations Minister of Culture Former President Former President	José Serra Roberto Freire Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva Dilma Rousseff
 Cape Verde	Minister of Culture	Abraão Vicente
 China	Vice-President and member of the Politburo	Li Yuanchao
 Chile	President of the Senate President of the Chamber of Deputies Minister of Social Development	Ricardo Lagos Weber Oswaldo Andrade Marcos Barraza
 Colombia	Delegation of the Colombian government Representatives of the  FARC	Various Various

 France	Minister of Ecology Presidential envoy for Latin America	Ségolène Royal Jean-Pierre Bel
 Gabon	President of the Senate	Lucie Milebou Aubusson
 Germany	Former Chancellor	Gerhard Schröder
 Laos	Former President	Choummaly Sayasone
 India	Home Minister Lok Sabha Deputy Speaker BJP MP INC MP CPI (M) General-Secretary CPI Secretary BJD MP Samajwadi Party MP	Rajnath Singh M. Thambidurai Ramen Deka Anand Sharma Sitaram Yechury D. Raja Jhina Hikaka Javed Ali Khan
 Cambodia	Delegation of the Cambodian government	Various
 Ireland	Mexico-based Ambassador President of Sinn Féin	Sonja Hyland Gerry Adams TD
 Jamaica	Leader of the Opposition, Former Prime Minister	Portia Simpson-Miller
 Japan	Member of the House of Representatives	Keiji Furuya
 Malaysia	Ambassador to Cuba	Khairi Omar
 Mozambique	Former President	Armando Guebuza
 North Korea	Member of the Politburo Standing Committee	Choe Ryong-hae
 Portugal	Minister Assistant	Eduardo Cabrita
 Cyprus	Former President	Demetris Christofias
 Russia	Chairman of the State Duma Deputy Prime Minister	Vyacheslav Volodin Dmitry Rogozin
 Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	Minister of Foreign Relations	Mohamed Salem Ould Salek
 Spain	Former King	Juan Carlos I of Spain
 United Kingdom	Minister of State for Europe and the Americas Shadow Foreign Secretary (Labour)	Alan Duncan Emily Thornberry
 United States of America	Deputy National Security Adviser Ambassador-designate	Ben Rhodes Jeffrey DeLaurentis
 Uruguay	Vice-President Former President	Raúl Fernando Sendic José Mujica

UK [Opposition Leader Jeremy Corbyn](#) was scheduled to attend as part of his country's delegation. However, his attendance was later denied. U.S. preacher and civil rights leader Reverend [Jesse Jackson](#) spoke at a memorial for Castro in Havana. Others in attendance included [Hollywood's Danny Glover](#) and Argentine football player [Diego Maradona](#), who said: "I feel Cuban."



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